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ACTION EB-00

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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EB/TPP/ABT/BTT DEBORAH MALAC AND JACK BOBO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [BIOTECHNOLOGY](#)

SUBJECT: GHANA: REQUEST FOR FUNDS FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY
OUTREACH PROGRAMS

REF: A SECSTATE 244670 B 04 ACCRA 01543 C 03 ACCRA

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1. This cable, in response to Ref A, requests funds for FY 05 public diplomacy outreach projects related to agricultural biotechnology. Post requests funding for upcoming workshops to be undertaken in conjunction with USAID,s Program for Biosafety Systems, the goal of which is to promote the judicious use of modern agricultural biotechnology in order to increase agricultural productivity. Post estimates a need for approximately six workshops with six speakers in 2005, to be more fully identified by USAID over the next several months, at a cost of \$39,500.

Background on Biotech in Ghana

2. Ghana is moving forward in developing policies and legislation to regulate biotech (Ref B). In July 2004, Ghana hosted a National Stakeholder Workshop to discuss the final draft components of the National Biosafety Framework for Ghana, which will form the basis of future biosafety regulations. Ghana has since submitted the document to UNEP/GEF, the first of 39 African countries to do so.

3. Ghana also submitted, at the end of 2004, a Biosafety bill to the Minister of Environment; the bill will then be sent to Parliament through the Attorney General,s Office. The Bill establishes the National Biosafety Authority to process applications relating to biotech substances under the Act.

4. Post discussions on biotech with Ghanaian scientists (Ref C) indicate that while there is broad recognition of the potential benefits biotech can offer, there is also a public wariness about biotech and popular support for regulatory precautions and Ghanaian scientist review of biotech.

5. Ghana is clearly moving forward on biosafety, but could benefit from outreach that would support science-based regulatory efforts and provide accurate information to the broader public on the positive benefits of biotech. The US message could best be disseminated by working through USAID,s new program, the Program for Biosafety Systems (PBS), which promotes the judicious use of modern agricultural biotechnology in Ghana.

USAID,s Program for Biosafety Systems (PBS)

6. USAID will soon sign an agreement with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) to undertake a three-year program in Ghana--the Program for Biosafety Systems (PBS)--designed to assist the Government of Ghana to develop policies, training and details that will support Ghana,s biosafety legislation. IFPRI will be the lead institution but will cull expertise from other US-based biotechnology research institutions to implement the PBS program. PBS, funded through the U.S. Presidential Initiative to End Hunger in Africa (IEHA), will complement an ongoing regional biosafety and biotech program funded by USAID,s West Africa Regional Program (WARP).

7. The purpose of the PBS program is to promote the judicious use of modern agricultural biotechnology in Ghana in order to increase agricultural productivity with linkages to regional and global markets. As an initial priority, PBS will facilitate establishment of policies and regulations that enable the testing and use of approved bioengineered crops and other organisms.

18. The overall objectives of the program are to establish an enabling policy environment for the testing and use of biotechnology products; strengthen skills and increase capacity for near-term conduct of field trials and food safety assessments; and develop and implement a strategic plan for communications and outreach that engages diverse stakeholders and the general public.

Target Audience

19. PBS will work primarily with the Biotechnology and Nuclear Agriculture Research Institute of the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission (BNARI/GAEC). Other partner institutions and key stakeholders, and people to whom we would target our message, include the Ministries of Agriculture, Trade, Environment, Health, the universities, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, as well as additional public and private sector groups.

Proposed Program

110. Post believes that it could significantly support PBS objectives if experienced individuals were available to participate in workshops or conferences that offered exposure, experience and specialized instruction on PBS

priorities to our targeted partners and stakeholders, above. Public outreach that supplemented PBS objectives would bolster and strengthen U.S. efforts to support Ghana, s judicious of biotech and would help introduce the potential benefits of biotech to consumers. Through discussions with USAID, Post envisions approximately six conference workshops over the course of the year that would require six experts to speak. Presenters should specifically focus on:

- Biosafety policy, legal and regulatory development
- Implementation of biosafety procedures at national and institutional levels
- Technical training in key skill areas of biosafety review and regulatory oversight
- Development of regulatory approval strategies to allow field-testing of specific transgenic crop varieties
- Development and implementation of a strategic plan for communication and outreach activities.

111. Furthermore, it would be useful to host speakers or facilitators who have experience working with international trade protocols in developing countries and who have knowledge of other international biosafety agreements involving the U.S. and EU. Perhaps most importantly, Post envisions hosting instructors on public awareness and communication strategies in order to promote and build broader understanding within civil society in general, specifically targeting interest groups such as farmer organizations, academic institutions, local and international NGOs, and seed companies. USAID will have the lead in identifying specific speakers.

112. As the PBS program evolves over the next year, Post expects to move forward with ideas about specific biotechnology applications in Ghana. Possible applications for Ghana would include an insect-resistant cowpea now underway in Nigeria; virus-resistant cassava; and, insect-resistant cotton, which is now being tested in Burkina Faso and will soon be tested in Mali.

Costs

113. For each speaker from the US, with one week in Ghana, we estimate the following costs:

- Per Diem at USD 54 per day
 - Lodging at USD 102 per day
 - Salary at USD 400 per day
- for a total of USD 556 per day per speaker
- Each speaker would stay an estimated six days; at USD 556 per day, this would be USD 3,336 per speaker. Additionally, with the roundtrip airfare at approximately USD 2,500, the total for each speaker cost would be approximately USD 5,836.
- To host six speakers throughout the year (at USD 5,836 each) would be USD 35,000.

114. Additionally, the costs for a one-day conference workshop, (including hotel conference facility, coffee, and lunch) for approximately 25 people are estimated at USD 750. For 6 workshops, this cost would be USD 4,500.

115. The combined costs of workshop speakers (USD 35,000) and facilities (USD 4,500) for 6 workshops would be USD 39,500.

Post appreciates EB,s consideration of Post,s request for
funds to support the dissemination of accurate information on
biotech in Ghana.
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